

REMARKS:

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that, in their response filed on July 1, 2003, an older version of the claims listing was inadvertently included. This had the unintended result of adding an additional claim (corresponding to claim 18 from the previous response) to the application. Since, as indicated by the claim status in that response, no amendment to the claims of this type was intended, the claims listing added with this response is based on the original claims filed with the application. This accounts for the discrepancy in numbering between the current set of claims and the set of claims submitted with the previous response.

The Examiner's allowance of claims 31-33 (now claims 30-32), and his notice of allowability with respect to claim 28 (now claim 27), is gratefully acknowledged. The claims ~~have been amended with this response so that they are drawn~~ to the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Thus, the limitations of claim 27 (and the limitations of claim 26), which depends from independent claim 25 and intermediate claim 26, have been incorporated into claim 25. The remaining claims have either been cancelled or amended so that they are dependent from the allowed claims.

Reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection of claims 9-11, 14, 15, 18-22 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hong et al. is respectfully requested.

As noted above, the claims have been amended with this response so that they are drawn to the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been overcome.

Reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection of claims 12, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 5,962,883 (Hong et al.) in view of the Examiner's official notice (that provision of oxygen by evaporation in evaporation processes was known prior to Applicants' invention) is respectfully requested.

As noted above, the claims have been amended with this response so that they are drawn to the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been overcome.

Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. An early indication thereof is respectfully solicited. Please charge any fee deficiency due with this amendment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-2726.

Respectfully submitted,

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